In the name of Allah, The most beneficent, The most merciful.

## What Can We Do for Disabled Afghans?

The invasion of our beloved country Afghanistan by the Soviet Red Army in 1979 is known to all Afghan compatriots. These brave and respected Afghan compatriots launched a comprehensive struggle against this invasion which lasted for 14 years. As a result of the Soviet-imposed war, 90% of the infrastructure of Afghanistan was demolished; houses, villages, government establishments, hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, irrigation systems have been destroyed to such an extent that in many places there are no signs of their previous existence.

In the name of our Islamic faith, of the spirit of Afghan culture and tradition, the preservation and protection of the dignity and honor of Afghan society and to maintain the freedom and defence of our homeland our countrymen participated in this struggle. Millions of Afghans were killed and hundreds of thousands were disabled. The memory of their sacrifice will be written in golden lines in the history of the Jihad and they will remain proud of their disabilities throughout their life. But if they do not receive our sympathy and cooperation and we do not offer them help to meet their needs, they may feel disheartened about being disabled and may ask, "For what have I lost a part of my body, for what have I lost my freedom, my independence?
It is possible that some individuals of great patience and moral strength may not ask such questions, but it will be continually asked by the major portion of the illiterate disabled who are overwhelmed with bewilderment and anxiety.

These men and women and children who have sacrificed their legs, their arms, their eyes, and have become either paralyzed or crippled are our countrymen, they are members of our society. They are the people who, without question, took weapons in their hands, lived in the mountains and hills - thirsty and hungry for the cause of freeing their homeland, of defending Islam, their dignity and their honor. They went into exile to free their homeland. These are the people that all Afghan families are proud of.

International statistics show that an estimated 400,000 men, women and children in Afghanistan are suffering from some physical disability as a result of mine explosions, bombardments, artillery shelling or other assaults to which they were exposed,

becoming injured, maimed, crippled or paralyzed. Similarly, due to harsh conditions of immigration or life inside Afghanistan and due to lack of basic health services they suffer disabilities which need urgent treatment right now, but no attention has been paid so far to their physical and emotional problems or to their basic human rights.

As a result of mine explosions and a lack of health facilities, the number of men and women with disabilities increases daily in our beloved country of Afghanistan. These disabled people have the same expectations as healthy individuals, with the difference that the disabled have more needs than the healthy, in the following areas:

- Health facilities
- Rehabilitation
- Special education
- Vocational training
- Full participation in social life and community affairs.
- Provision of equal employment and right to work.
- Modification of surroundings for easier access for those with impaired mobility.
- Legal acceptance of their rights.

disabled Afghans in the aforementioned areas while the reconstruction process for Afghanistan is going on. If we offer help right away to these disabled men and women, they can begin to benefit also as an integral part of the reconstruction programs and efforts. Out of the above mentioned areas of assistance

it is very important to provide vocational training to the disabled during the period of their rehabilitation. Also it is important to provide the disabled with the surroundings and environment which will take their handicaps into account and make provisions for them. These provisions should be included in all reconstruction planning from the beginning, and in all rehabilitation activities taking place at village, district and provincial levels.
To accomplish this, time, thought, effort and money is necessary but the results will be of benefit to the entire population and for which all people, particularly the disabled themselves, will remain grateful all their lives.
By the Grace of God, facilities will be constructed in such a manner that the disabled will have easy access to them.

It is the duty of all Afghans in the first place and secondly of all humanitarian people of the world to consider making all-out efforts to help the

If those architects who are responsible for construction take into consideration the requirements of the disabled in their design of public buildings, social centers, hospitals, mosques, markets, trading centers, parks, recreational places, airports, and other public constructions, they will receive appropriate rewards from Almighty Allah. This will be considered as a great benefit to the persons with disabilities and will bring about the happiness of the whole population of our society and to any disabled visitors from other countries.



We must imagine the feelings and situation of disabled person with mobility impairment if they are not provided an environment that offers a minimum accessibility and allows them to move about freely and independently.

If the disabled persons must go somewhere where there are no suitable paths and where they cannot take their wheelchair, or if they need to go to an office on the second or third floor, or to a market or mosque or take a bus or van and due to lack of an accessible construction, they find themselves isolated and helpless. Then what will be their feelings?

Do you know how frustrating or discouraging this can be? Of course you don't.
This frustration can only be felt by a person in a wheelchair deprived of both legs, who is paralyzed, or disabled in another way.



Such a person will become depressed, cynical and pessimistic about his life, and will bring unhappiness to all those around him.

To help disabled Afghan men and women overcome a feeling of hopelessness, of despair, FWSAD is promoting the rights of person with disabilities. FWSAD would like to advocate for environmental accessibility for people with disabilities.

This small publication speaks for the rights of the Afghan disabled.

INTERNATIONAL SYMBOL OF This ACCESS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Introduction.**

This symbol, designed by Suzanne Koeford of Denmark, was selected in July 1966 at a seminar sponsored by a Scandinavian student



organization from among many designs. This symbol was offered by the organization as a contribution to the disabled people of the world. The International Society for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, New York, USA, adopted this symbol for the purpose of identifying those public and private buildings and ways which offer easy access to persons with disabilities.

**APPEAL :**

. The FWSAD appeals to all government and non-government agencies in Afghanistan to incorporate in their reconstruction planning facilities to benefit the disabled, and then to adopt the Symbol of Access, to utilize all their available resources to promote it and open the doors to the disabled to all government buildings, air terminals, hostels and hotels, public markets, private offices, mosques, recreational places, shops and sidewalks, doorways, lifts.



**Display :**

This Symbol of Access is displayed on buildings which have:

* An entrance with a ramp and no steps
* Doorways and entrances at least 32 inches (80 cm) wide to accommodate wheelchairs .
* Toilet facilities with doors 32 inches (80 cm wide) for wheelchair accessibility
* Lifts which are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs.

**Note :**

Concerning the environmental accessibility of persons with disabilities you can obtain detailed information from the informatiom management programs of FWSAD. We would be happy to receive your opinions, suggestions and inquiries.

The Free Welfare Society for Afghan Disabled is struggling for the betterment of the life of persons with disabilities in all sectors, for their rehabilitation and legalization of their rights;

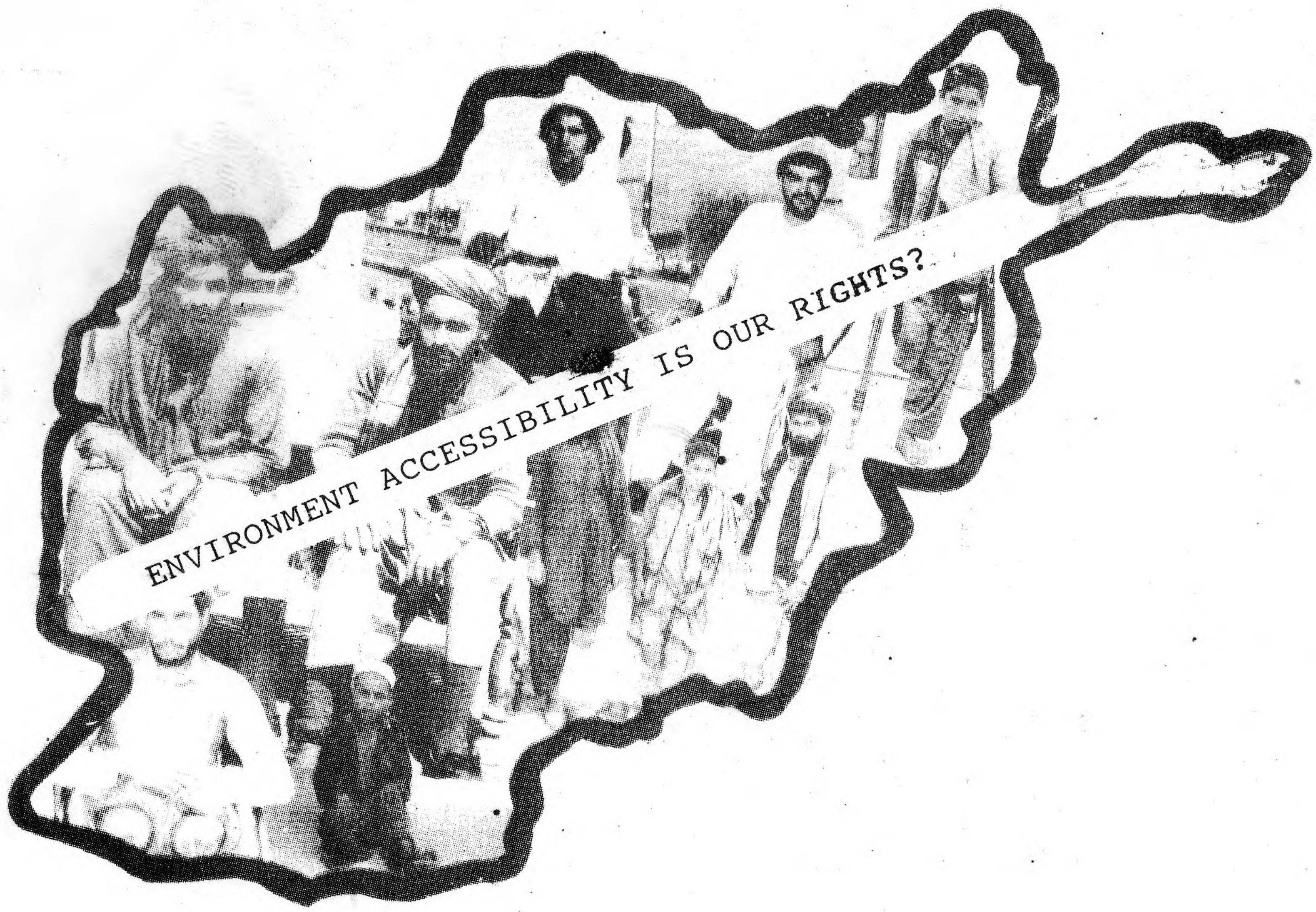
The human loving and freedom loving people of Afghanistan should take into account the needs for environmental accessibility of the disabled as they make their plans for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

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# Facilitis For People With Disabilities

FREE WELFARE SOCIETY FOR AFGHAN DISABLED




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